

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 723

By Bone

A RESOLUTION to honor Captain Hunter L. Belcher of Lebanon upon being awarded the General Douglas MacArthur Leadership Award.

WHEREAS, our nation was conceived by individuals who were willing to sacrifice their personal safety and concerns to ensure our individual and collective freedom, and the Volunteer State is especially proud to be the home of so many valiant men and women who have performed above and beyond the call of duty; and

WHEREAS, many fine and honorable traditions have arisen from the deep wellspring of honor and bravery possessed by Tennesseans, but there is no finer tradition than that which gave Tennessee its nickname; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of the "Volunteer State" have, throughout the years, willingly forsaken the comforts and securities of inaction by taking up arms against the enemies of this great nation, risking their lives and leaving their loved ones behind to honorably safeguard the freedoms and liberties guaranteed to all citizens of these United States and vanquishing those who threaten our way of life; and

WHEREAS, many fine men and women have demonstrated outstanding leadership qualities as commissioned officers in the Tennessee National Guard, and their singular abilities have contributed to the gallant history of this State's National Guard units; and

WHEREAS, the General Douglas MacArthur Leadership Award is given annually to active duty, United States Army Reserve and National Guard commissioned and warrant officers who exhibit extraordinary leadership abilities and embody the credo embraced by General MacArthur – "Duty, Honor, Country"; criteria for the award include the ability to motivate

others, understand fellow Soldiers, and inspire commitment, teamwork and esprit de corps, according to Army regulation; and

WHEREAS, on May 25, 2005, at the Pentagon, General Peter J. Shoomaker, Chief of Staff of the Army, along with Duane N. Diedrich of the General Douglas MacArthur Foundation, presented awards to 27 outstanding and exemplary officers; one of these fine officers was Captain Hunter L. Belcher of Chicago, presently living in Lebanon, Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Captain Belcher successfully mobilized and deployed 181 soldiers of the 269th Military Police Company in support of Operation Noble Eagle II and Operation Iraqi Freedom one; the unit mobilized to Fort Campbell, Kentucky in December of 2003 and was attached to the 716th Military Police Battalion, 101st Airborne Division (AASLT). While at Fort Campbell, Captain Belcher's unit provided Law and Order Support and Force Protection for the entire post and the Fort Campbell community; and

WHEREAS, Captain Belcher's unit deployed forward to Baghdad, Iraq in June of 2003 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom; during the next twelve months in Iraq, Captain Belcher commanded his unit with great acumen and distinction, leading from the front and inspiring and motivating his unit to succeed within an extremely austere, urban combat environment; and

WHEREAS, Captain Belcher's leadership skills instilled confidence in his soldiers, while maintaining an exemplary command presence; Captain Belcher far exceeded the expectations of an officer of his grade and experience; and

WHEREAS, while commanding his unit in Baghdad, Captain Belcher provided direction and motivation for his unit on an unprecedented number of missions, including more than 2,500 security escorts, 4,000 combat patrols, and the training of more than 1,500 Iraqi Police, all without the cost of a single life; bringing to bear his outstanding skills, he was able to build cohesive teams that bridged political, cultural, and religious gaps between civilian advisors, senior military representatives, and local Muslim leaders; and

WHEREAS, Captain Belcher's outstanding leadership abilities have been manifested in his dedication to supporting his local community through his participation in an elementary school reading program, supporting Boy Scout activities, and making speech presentations in the community; and

WHEREAS, true to family values of the highest order, Captain Belcher enjoys the love and support of his wife, Judy, and is the proud father of Brooke and Hayden; and

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly are proud to take this opportunity to specially recognize a valiant and distinguished officer of the Tennessee National Guard who so magnificently exemplifies the standards of a 21st century warrior through his outstanding leadership, delivered from the front and his commitment to the highest standards and values of the United States military; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor Captain Hunter L. Belcher, Tennessee National Guard, for his unswerving devotion to the credo of "Duty, Honor, Country", thank him for his courageous and selfless service in defense of our State and Nation, his fellow citizens and our shared values.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we congratulate Captain Belcher upon receiving the General Douglas MacArthur Leadership Award, and offer him our best wishes for every success in all his future endeavors and much happiness in the years to come.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.